



NCAA BASEBALL
CLOCK OPERATION GUIDE
UPDATED JANUARY 2023

20-Second Action Clock & 120-Second Between Innings Limits
SUMMARY

20-Second Action Clock Limit

When the ball is “dead”, the pitcher must engage the pitcher’s plate with possession of the ball before the ball can be put into play.

First pitch of each half-inning OR After “Time” is called OR Ball becomes “dead” (for example, a foul ball or pickoff throw goes out of play)	Pitcher <u>engages pitcher’s plate</u> with possession of ball AND Catcher in catcher’s box AND Batter in batter’s box	Start time limit when plate umpire signals “Play”
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When the ball remains “alive” between batters or between pitches, the time limit begins when the pitcher has possession of the ball in the circle surrounding the pitcher’s rubber.

First pitch of any subsequent at-bat (Give batter opportunity to get to the plate and be in the box for the first pitch.)	Pitcher has possession of ball <u>in the circle</u> surrounding the pitcher’s plate AND Catcher in catcher’s box AND Batter in batter’s box	Start time limit when plate umpire signals “Play”. (Point at pitcher or use twirling signal used to reset the clock.)
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After each pitch during an at-bat (following the first pitch) when ball remains alive and batter remains at bat	Pitcher has possession of ball <u>in the circle</u> surrounding the pitcher’s plate AND Catcher in catcher’s box	No signal is required. Start the time limit when the pitcher receives the ball and is on the mound
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If the catcher or other defensive player intentionally delays getting the ball to the pitcher on the mound so that the time limit doesn’t start, or if the pitcher delays taking their position on the mound, the plate umpire may point to have the 20-second time limit started.

The timer shall stop under the following circumstances:

- The pitcher begins the windup motion or, from a set position, begins the motion to deliver the pitch.
- The pitcher makes a pickoff attempt (throw) to any base.
- With runners on base, the pitcher steps off the pitcher's plate to get a new sign or to feint a pickoff attempt. This action counts as a "reset" and is allowed one time per at-bat.
- The catcher leaves the catcher's box to give defensive signals or to confer with the pitcher from a distance (in which case the timer shall stop, reset, and start again after the catcher returns to the catcher's box). This action counts as a "reset" and is allowed one time per at-bat.
- The umpire calls "time" for any legitimate reason.

With runners on base and after the 20-second time limit has started, the defensive team is allowed only one "reset" per at-bat.

When there are no runners on base, if a pitcher steps off the pitcher's plate before starting a windup motion or beginning the motion to deliver the pitch, the time limit (or clock) does not stop unless the umpire grants the pitcher "time" for a legitimate reason.

120-Second Between Innings Limit

- Between innings, 120 seconds to be ready for first pitch
 - Pitcher holding the ball and touching the pitcher's rubber.
 - Batter standing in the batter's box ready to hit.
- Starts when all defensive players have started to leave their positions after the last out has been made.
- Stops when the umpire calls/signals "Play" for the first pitch of the next half-inning.
- If no visible clock is being utilized, with 30 seconds left the base umpire keeping the timing device will visually cue the plate umpire by extending one hand/arm above his head. The plate umpire will announce "30 seconds" and summon the lead-off batter to the plate. At 15 seconds left, the base umpire will lower his arm to parallel with the ground, and point at the plate umpire when the time limit expires.
- During the first inning for both pitchers and when a relief pitcher enters the game to start an inning, the clock starts as usual, but the pitcher is entitled to eight (8) warmup pitches. There is no penalty if the time limit expires.
- If the catcher is the third out or on base when the third out is made, the offensive team should have someone ready to warm up the pitcher. If the game catcher is not out of the dugout with 30 seconds left in the time limit and another player is warming up the pitcher, hold the pitcher with one warmup left and wait for the game catcher arrive to throw down following the last warmup pitch.

- If the P/DH is the third out or on base when the third out is made to end the inning, start the 120-second time limit as always, but allow the P/DH to get their glove and be ready to start the warmups without penalizing the defense for exceeding the 120-second time limit.
- Enforce the rule and use common sense.

For further information, refer to Appendix F.